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New Year's a Way of Counting Time

NEW YEAR'S DAY may be the most misplaced of our holidays. It ought to coincide with the spring equinox, when a new growing season begins, or with the autumnal equinox, when the growing season ends.

This will never happen, of course, because nations in the northern hemisphere and those in the southern world do not agree on which should have the beginning and which the end of the season.

So we will go on celebrating the New Year with football games in the middle of the basketball season while we are trying to recover from Christmas, balance our accounts and figure up our taxes.

After all, years are only a means of measuring time and how we celebrate New Year's Day relates to time we hope to receive.

"Time is the most undefinable yet paradoxical of things," wrote a philosopher named Colton. "The past is gone, the future has not come, and the present becomes the past even while we try to define it, and, like the flash of lightning, at once exists and expires."

Ruins of prehistoric civilizations

reveal that ancient man was conscious of the passage of time and devised means to measure it.

The main difficulty with calendars is that they are based upon the time required for the earth to orbit the sun. Scientists figure this takes 364 $\frac{1}{4}$ days, an irregularity handled by adding a day every fourth year to February, the only ideal month of four weeks.

In 1923 the League of Nations tried to reform the calendar so that all months and quarters of the year would be regular. The League received 185 plans for a new calendar, none of which was adopted. The League didn't attain its goal of world peace, either.

The most popular proposal was an equal month calendar devised by an English statistician named Moses B. Cotsworth. It called for 13 months of 28 days, each beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday.

The extra month would have been inserted between June and July and named Sol in honor of the sun. The 365th day would have come after December and named "Peace Day."

Every fourth year a 366th day would have been inserted between June and Sol but not a part of either.

Workers paid by the month would have enjoyed 13 pay days and the superstitious would have had a Friday the Thirteenth every month.

In the Bible, Ecclesiastes tells us there is a time to be born, a time to die, and a right time for many other specified events.

Time is the most valuable thing a person can spend. Like money, time may be invested or wasted. Many try to save time but it cannot be accumulated; only put to better uses.

Each new year we assume we have a clean page of 365 ahead of us but we don't know how many we may enjoy before our time is up.

"Lost yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with 60 golden minutes," Lydia H. Sigourney wrote long ago. "No reward is offered, for they are gone forever."

What we do with our time is more important than how we celebrate its passage or welcome the arrival of a new year.